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Article 1

CMP230 Information Literacy

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URL: <http://www.pbs.org/teachers/earlychildhood/articles/dramaticplay.html>

Article Summary-

This article talks about the importance of play in pre-schooled aged children. The article discusses the relationship between dramatic play and cognitive, physical and social/emotional development in kids. Its just as important to incorporate play into a classroom routine as it is to teach other concepts such as math skills. Many times, however, play is put on the back burner or only allotted small blocks of time during the day. Educators find that new learning concepts take precedence and therefore “play time” is limited. Research has proven how crucial it is for kids to be allowed to engage in imaginative play. Imaginative play or pretend play teaches children how to engage in social (and appropriate) roles with others, how to share, how to solve problems, how to initiate and respond in conversations, how to use appropriate language skills with peers, how to take turns and how to be less egocentric. Studies also show how overtime play can effect kid’s ability to increase their health, their fitness, their strength and the fine/gross motor skills.

Response-

As an educator, I have play to be extremely important for younger children. I have been in the field for four years now and have seen first hand how much it can impact children’s lives. Before I began working with young children, I never quite understood the importance of play. I thought it was brought into pre-school and kindergarten classrooms simply because children liked to play and thought it was fun. I never understood why it would become the main focus and I certainly didn’t believe children got anything out of it, aside from pure fun with their friends. I work in a program that caters to children with autism at the elementary level, usually kindergarten through grade 2. During the summers, I work in a similar type of program, but at the pre-school level and then I help transition those children coming into kindergarten. The pre-school I work is very focused on play. Free play and creativity is encouraged, however done so with structure and an educational theme. Age appropriate play materials are designated to certain areas of the classroom which is tied in to whatever thematic unit the class is learning that week. Children are assigned to a certain “play station” with 3-4 other children to hopefully establish cooperative play skills. I have observed many children engage in a variety of play settings with their peers, and when the inevitable disagreement occurs, children learn how to respond or act in an appropriate way. Teachers of course, facilitate the social learning process, but eventually teachers end up fading their support because kids end up learning what the social norms are through their peers. As children get older and progress through school, they encounter more situations in life that they are expected to be able to respond to in an appropriate manner. The more imaginative play that is exposed early on, the more socially and cognitively prepared a child is in the long run, which makes for a more well adjusted and healthy child.